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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Oilstoves and Summer Cooking." Information from the Extension Service, U.S.D.A.

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As warm weather sets in, we women begin to think about the heat in the kitchen. We try to plan meals that won't require long cooking. We consider kitchen ventilation. And we think especially about the stove. A fire all day long in the range is comfortable enough in February, but it isn't so nice in June and July. So in many homes, rural homes especially, the coal or wood range goes on a vacation in summer, and the oilstove takes over the job of cooking meals for the family and canning. Oilstoves don't heat up their surroundings as coal and wood ranges do. And they're inexpensive to buy and run. They're light-weight so they're easy to carry and install, even up on a mountain top. And they're especially convenient for homes out of reach of gas or electricity. So you'll find them in many country homes and also in summer cottages or camps.

But, of course, they have their disadvantages, too. They need to be cleaned and cared for properly or they won't give good service. You can't just turn them on and off like gas or electricity and do nothing more. That's why rural housewives in Ohio last year asked the state extension service for some talks and demonstrations on running oil cooking stoves. The specialists, with the help of commercial firms, staged a series of what they called "oilstove clinics"-- 86 of them. And over eleven hundred Ohio women took part. They brought their ailing stoves to the meetings, and the specialists showed them how to clean and adjust and use them properly. Oilstove companies loaned equipment and let the specialists visit their factories and observe all the ins and outs of these stoves.

If you do your summer cooking by oil, I'm sure you'll be interested in some of the questions the women at these clinics asked -- and the answers the specialists gave.

One question frequently asked was about the stove that smokes -- "What causes the flame of the long-chimney oilstove to smoke?" Well, several things, say the Ohio specialists. A dirty wick is one sufficiently good reason for a smoky flame. An uneven wick is another. Then, perhaps the airholes around the bottom of the chimney are stopped up; that cuts off the draught and makes the flame smoke. Or, the mica of the chimney window may be broken, letting in the air at the wrong point. Or, if the holes in the flame spreader are clogged, that prevents good circulation of air, which the flame needs for clear burning. Use a stiff bristle brush or a wire brush to keep the spreader clean. Finally, you'll get a smoky and inefficient flame if the wick is turned so high that it touches the flame spreader and leaves no space between. To sum up the matter, you need to keep the wick clean and trimmed and the other parts of the stove brushed and clean. And you need to see that air feeds the flame at the right place.

Another question about oilstoves-- "What causes a wick to burn out very rapidly?" Again, many things. The commonest reason is lack of oil. If you let the oil supply run out and the wick burn dry, then the part of the wick that extends above the tubes will char. Be sure you always have plenty of kerosene in the reservoir. Then, if the fuel line or burner elbow gets clogged so the oil supply can't reach the wick, naturally the same thing happens.

Or, if you don't adjust your wick properly, if you set it so that it will turn too high, it will burn. If you have a short-drum oil stove, you have to be careful about tightening the removable screw top. Otherwise, the air will enter the wick tubes and allow the entire wick to burn when the oil runs low. Finally, if your stove isn't set level on the floor, you'll find that the wick farthest from the oil tank will get too little oil and burn out sooner than the others.

Don't forget that you'll have best results by following the printed directions that come with your oilstove.

So much for the troubles of oilstoves and their remedies. Now a few more ideas about warm-weather cooking to help you plan menus that won't heat up your kitchen. Broiling is one of the best methods of quick cooking -- broiling on a rack under an open flame or pan-broiling in a frying pan on top of the stove. If you are using an oilstove, you'll pan-broil your steaks, chops and so on.

But if you have an electric or gas stove with a broiler, you can broil foods on the rack. In pan-broiling you just shine or wipe over the pan with a little fat and then cook quickly in a piping-hot pan.

The foods for broiling on a rack or pan-broiling include the tender, quick-cooking meats as well as vegetables and some fruits. The meats for broiling include the tender cuts like lamb chops, beefsteaks, liver and kidneys. They also include the prepared meats like ground meat in patties, sausages, bacon and thin slices of ham. Among the vegetables you can broil halves of tomatoes, mushrooms, slices of eggplant and cooked sweetpotatoes. Brush the vegetables over with melted butter before putting them on the rack. Several fruits also broil well and give variety to your grilled plate -- bananas cut in half the long way, canned peaches, canned slices of pineapple drained free of juice. Fruits like vegetables have better flavor and take on a nice brown color if you brush them over with melted butter before you broil them. Young tender chickens broil well too. That goes without saying since we've been calling them broilers all these years. And fish -- fish fillets and fish steaks, especially the more oily kinds of fish, also are good broiled.

Well, here's a warm-day dinner planned for cooking mostly on the grill or for pan-broiling. Broiled calves' liver; Broiled tomato halves; Broiled bananas; Spring green onions; Fresh strawberry pie or tarts; Coffee. By the way, to make a fresh strawberry pie, pile the raw berries in a hollow pastry shell and top them with whipped cream; or cover them with a clear red cornstarch sauce made of berry juice, sugar and cornstarch. The effect is of berries in a rich, red jelly.

Once more, the menu: Broiled calves' liver, tomatoes and bananas; Spring onions; Fresh strawberry pie or tarts; and Coffee.

